THE PASTIME.

No. 4.

Saturday, March 14, 1807.

American Literature.

The following was published some years since in a remote country paper, and we re-print it as a novelty to our readers. Messrs. *Verbal* & *Trochee* have since removed their *shop*, considering perhaps, that such a *capital* as theirs might avail them better in some part of our Republic where *taste* was a more *marketable* commodity.

FROM THE TOY-SHOP OF MESSRS. VERBAL & TROCHEE.

POETRY PERSONIFIED.

It frequently happens that we find the writers of poetry invoking the aid of some poetical deity with the utmost reverence, and then, just before they finish their parnassian adventures, abusing their ideal patron, or patroness, as a vicious mountebank, or a deceitful hag. Not, indeed, for any imputed neglect to inspire them with the powers of harmony, the ardor of expression, or sublimity of thought; but, because they do not, at once, fix both their fame, and their fortune. This, by the way, is rude and insulting behavior to the Muses, who do not pretend to know any thing about *pecuniary* matters, and care so little for the *fame* of importunate poetasters, they permitted Young to declare that

"———Fame and Fortune both are made of *prose.*"

This evening, however, in reading some favourite productions, we found three instances in which Poetry itself is very happily personified. In these the idea of poetry and poverty's being inseperable is, indeed, brought to view; but without any ungrateful reproaches. Virtuous and powerful attributes are ascribed to the celestial dame in such sweet and dignified language, we presume those, who ever felt the enlivened and sublime sentiments, which poesy (independent of any considerations of fame, fortune or favor) always inspires, will not be fatigued with the recital.

We present the first from Mr. Paine's "*Ruling Passion*," an occasional poem of great merit, abounding in bold and energetic thoughts, expressed in nervous language, and painted in glowing colors; but sometimes defective in point of harmony, as will be perceived in the second line we transcribe.

"All hail, sweet Poesy! transcendant maid!
To whom my fond youth's earliest vows were paid;
Who, drest in sapphire robes, with eye of fire,
Didst first my unambitious rhyme inspire;

Lur'd by whose charms, I left, in passion'd hope,
My WATTS' *Logic* for the page of POPE;
If e'er regardful of thy wilder'd sons,
For whom so gingerly life's current runs;
Who, like the slaves, beneath the iron sway
Of curs'd *Mezentius*, ling'ring loath the day—
Doom'd, horrid fate! the *living* MUSE to see
Bound to the mould'ring *corpse* of Penury; (*)
Descend, like JOVE, suffus'd in golden show'r,
And on our garret-roofs the *rain-drops* pour!
But if the current of CASTALIA's waves
No *Wicklow* mine, no *Georgian* acre, laves;
If still bleak *Want* must chill thy votaries' fire—
Their taste extinguish, and take back their lyre."

We cannot but observe how directly opposite our author's last sentiment is to that of PARNELL, who, when he wished poets might "have bread as well as praise," added in the same manner,

But if their riches spoil their vein,
Ye Muses, make them poor again!

The second is that beautiful address at the close of the "*Present State of Literature*," a poem pronounced at Yale College, by WARREN DUTTON.

"And O, sweet POESY! thou nymph forlorn,
Cold, and unheeded as the wintry storm;
Still may thy voice be heard where Ganges flows,
Or winter sits, girt with eternal snows:
No venal spot upon thy robe be seen;
No lustful passion wanton in thy mein;
Still mays't thou lead, with thy enchanting strain,
The mimic arts, light dancing in thy train;
Fair virtue hail thee with a sister's eye,
Love own thy pow'r, and pity learn to sigh.
May sacred truth, from thy rich wardrobe dress'd,
Come smiling forth, of every charm possess'd;
And faith and piety, upborne by thee,
From earth ascend, and bend th' adoring knee."

We seldom witness any thing conceived or expressed in better terms than this short address. But, considering the close resemblance, (not to say sameness) the sentiments in the 3d, 4th, 7th & 8th, 9th & 11th lines bear to those contained in the 9th—16th lines of the following piece, which we extract from the "*Deserted Village*." Mr. DUTTON will forgive us, if we give the preference to GOLDSMITH. We have often searched, and as often searched in vain, to find a parallel to this personification. There may be its compeer; but, we are persuaded that those who should require an author to animate and address his very employment,

(*) *Bound to the mould'ring corpse of penury.*

MEZENTIUS, a prince of *Tyrrhenes*, a contemner of the gods, was the inventor of the savage punishment of binding the devoted offender to the putrescent body of some former victim, sacrificed to his barbarity.—*Notes to the Poem.*

as it were, after reading this, would not even dream of a more beautiful specimen.

"And thou, sweet POETRY, thou lovliest maid,
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade;
Unfit in these degen'rate times of shame
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame;
Dear charming nymph, *neglected* and *decried*,
My *shame* in crowds, my solitary *pride*;
Thou source of all my JOY and all my WOE,
Thou found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so;
Thou guide, by which the nobler arts excel,
Thou source of ev'ry *virtue*, fare thee well;
Farewell, and O! where'er thy voice be tried,
On Torrio's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,
Whether where equinoctial fervors glow,
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow,
Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
Redress th' rigors of the inclement clime;
And slighted truth with thy persuasive strain,
Teach erring man to *spurn* the *rage* of *gain*;
Teach him, that *states* of *native* strength possest,
Tho' *very poor*, may still be VERY BLEST;
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the labor'd mole away;
While *self-dependent* pow'r can time *defy*,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky."

Biography.

LIFE OF DERMODY.

[Continued.]

"It was," says Dr. Houlton, "to the best of my recollection, in the year 1786, that chance brought me acquainted with young Dermody. Happening one day to notice a little country-looking boy, meanly habited, and evidently not more than ten years old, standing at an humble book-shop in Dublin, and reading Longinus in the Greek text, I was not a little surprized at the occurrence. I entered into conversation with him, and soon found him an adept in that language. I asked him home to dine with me. He accepted the invitation, informing me that his name was Thomas Dermody; and that his father was a school-master in the county of Clare, whom he had abruptly quitted, and begged his way to Dublin, where he had arrived only a short time since.

"During dinner, on whatever subject was started, I found him intelligent. He conversed in such nervous language, with such a measured pronunciation, pertinency of remark, and justness of observation, that I could not but contemplate him as an infant philosopher, or as a little being composed entirely of mind. To my greater surprise, he informed me that he had been an usher in his father's Latin and Greek school for the last two years, and

had commenced that duty at eight years of age. 'Then,' exclaimed I, 'you are doubtless conversant with most of the Latin and Greek authors that are generally read in these seminaries.' He answered that he was; and if I had any such in the house, he would attempt to convince me of it. I produced Horace and Homer, when he speedily proved that they were among his very intimate acquaintance. I remarked to him, that his application must have been immense. He modestly answered, that he was more ready to ascribe any proficiency he had attained, to his father's assiduity in instructing him; he having put him into the Latin accidence at four years of age, and unremittingly made him pursue his learning, (even amidst the drudgery of his ushership,) from the above early period, till the day he left him." The Dr. then invited him to make his house his residence, as he did not appear to have any settled home. He accepted the offer with gratitude; and promised to return in the evening, after having acquainted the person with whom he lodged a few nights before, of the invitation. He accordingly appeared at supper time, and presented Dr. Houlton with a bundle of papers which he requested him to read at his leisure, and shortly after retired to bed. On opening the manuscript, the Dr. was surprized to find that they were composed of sonnets and poetical translations, written by this boy of ten years of age, each headed, "by Thomas Dermody." The translations were detached portions from Virgil and Horace, more distinguished for integrity, than elegance: but "which (to use this gentleman's expressions) I had no doubt that more mature years, and practice, would have effected in him. It is impossible, however, to describe the pleasure I received, when I began to peruse his sonnets; in which his mind was unshackled, and his natural genius at full liberty to take its youthful flights into the regions of poesy. A justness of expression and sentiment, an appropriate imagery, (particularly in three or four pastoral pieces) an ease and sweetness of versification, together with the strictest accuracy of rhymes, pervaded the whole of the productions that were the offspring of his own fancy."

(To be continued.)

Variety.

"..... "STEALING, and GIVING SWEETS."

A friend favored us a few days since with a copy of the Lounger's Common Place Book, a valuable fund of miscellaneous reading, not every day to be met with. We suspend our rapid flight through these interesting volumes, to transcribe the following:

MICHAEL BRUCE, a pathetic, but not a generally known poet, of North Britain, born of parents remarkable only for innocence of life, and simplicity of manners, at a remote village, in the shire of Kinross. Nothing, says the ingenious and interesting author, to whom I am obliged for all I know of

Bruce, nothing more powerfully awakens the sympathies of a benevolent heart, than the consideration of genius, depressed by situation, pining in obscurity, and perishing for want of those comforts and conveniencies which might have fostered a delicate frame, and too susceptable a mind, to maturity, and length of days. "I never pass the place in which Michael Bruce resided, a little hamlet, skirted with venerable trees, without stopping my horse; a small thatched house, distinguished from the cottages which surround it, only by a sashed window, instead of a lattice, marks the spot; a honey-suckle, which the poor youth had planted and trained round the window, now almost covers it; in the dream of the moment I picture out a figure for the gentle tenant of the mansion; I wish, with a swelling heart, that he were still living, and myself a great man, that I might have the luxury of visiting him in his humble habitation, and bidding him be happy. *Moremur nescio quo pacto, locis ipsus in quilis, eo rum quos diligimus aut admiramur, adsunt Vestigia.*" We delight, we know not why, to tread where the footsteps of those whom we love, or admire, are to be traced.

Our young poet, whose form and constitution were not calculated to encounter the austerities of his native climate, the exertions of daily labor, and the rigid frugality of humble life, in a northern country, was siezed with a fever and cough, which proving consumptive, terminated his days, in the twenty-first year of his age. Convinced of the hopeless nature of his disease, he contemplated the approaches of death, with composure and dignity of mind, and within a fortnight of his decease, wrote a poem, which concludes with the following stanzas:

"Dim in my heart life's dying taper burns,
"And all the joys of life, with health are flown.

— — — — — — —

"Starting and shivering at the chilling wind,
"Meagre, and pale, the ghost of what I was,
"Beneath some blasted tree I lie reclin'd,
"And count the silent moments as they pass.

"Oft morning dreams presage approaching fate,
"And morning dreams, as poets tell, are true;
"Led by pale ghosts, I enter death's dark gate,
"And bid the realms of light and life adieu!

"Then! let me sleep forgotten in the clay,
"Let death quick shut these wearied, aching eyes,
"Wait the great hopes of that eternal day,
"When the long night shall cease, and the last morn arise."

The Abbe Chanlieu, in similar circumstances, has left, it is true, a composition on the same subject; but Bruce appears to have been equally a stranger to the tender, the sentimental Abbe, and to the language in which he wrote. More than one poet has been ambitious (not without incurring the charge of affectation) of the fame of poetic composition, a few hours before the perils of an engagement, when the attention of most men would be occupied by more important concerns than the jingle of a rhyme, or the arrangement of syllables. The praise of a firm and collected mind, cannot be denied to Bruce; he views the insidious approaches of an incurable disease, which gradually sapping the fountains of life, generally selects for its prey, the fairest and most amiable victims; without pretending to that apathy, which would have been unnatural and impious, in such circumstances, he feels and acknowledges the gloominess of his prospects, and turns for comfort, to a world beyond the grave.

This world is a *comedy* to those who think—a *tragedy* to those who feel.

In a private communication from a friend and relation of one of the Editors of the Pastime, to whose honor fame has more than once sounded the clarion of praise, we find the following elegant figure, in conclusion of some observations upon popularity:

"Shakspeare has somewhere remarked, "*it is the* BRIGHT DAY *that brings forth the* ADDER!" The moral of this is excellent.—The *same sun*, whose plastic power decks the blooming temples of Flora with chaplets, and bows the broad shoulders of Autumn with luxuriance, quickens from their chrysalis the SPLEENY race of *musquetoes*, and operates, like *Galvanism*, on the *torpid venom* of the *rattle snake!*"

In proposals lately issued, for a collection of Sacred Music, we are taught to expect, "Strains that would re-animate a soul *under the ribs* of death, in many of which the holy praises of the church have been wafted, even since the first introduction of metrical psalmody."

Original Poetry.

The following was written by a bard who often wanders in solitude up the mount of Parnassus, and tastes in secret, the Heliconian stream. It has never before met the public eye, and we regret, although the lines themselves cannot be read without emotion, the impossibility of describing the exquisite effect which they derived from the circumstances under which they were originally presented. Let our readers imagine, however, an assembly of parents collected, and with beating hearts, awaiting the moment when their children are to appear, and exhibit to a large audience, specimens of their scholastic acquirements. They are suddenly surprized by the drawing of a curtain, which brings to view one hundred beautiful girls and boys, few of whom have passed their fourteenth year. Let them imagine at the moment of their rising to salute the company, a band of music unexpectedly ejaculating a Hymn like this. Let them imagine, we repeat, and who would not feel with the parent?

Nature, great source of joy—
Parent of Hope and Love!—
Thy gifts our thoughts employ,
And lift our hearts above!
Through thee we raise
To HIM (whose sway
All worlds obey)
Our cheerful praise.

What blessings meet our eyes—
What transports heave the breast!
What tears of joy surprize
The heart supremely blest!
Search Nature round—
Her scenes of bliss
Surpassing this—
How seldom found!

Behold the rising age—
Our *trust* for future years!
These our fond hearts engage,
These exercise our cares.
Celestial giv'n,
To earth transfer'd,
To be prepar'd,
For seats in Heav'n.

Ourselves in these we view,
Our errors we retrieve,
Our life in them renew,
While time itself shall live.
In wisdom's ways,
A filial race,
Our works shall grace,
Thro' countless days.

To HIM who plac'd us here,
And kindly thus bestows,
We raise from hearts, sincere,
Our fond, and fervent vows.
Oh may he still
Our offspring lead
With careful heed
To do his will!

For the PASTIME.

A STUDENT'S SOLILOQUY.

Student, solus, *sitting in a thoughtful posture: his vest unbuttoned, and he looking very hungry. A two shilling piece on the table beside him.*

It must be so—Belly, thou reason'st well—
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after something good to eat:
Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror
Of going down to commons? Why shrinks the belly
Back on itself, and startles at bad victuals?
'Tis the divinity that stirs within us,
'Tis Hunger's self that points to good buck-wheats,
And intimates the best of meals at William's.
Good Eating! pleasing, dreadful thought,
Thro' what variety of untried courses,
Thro' what new meats and cordials wilt thou lead us?
The wide, th' unbounded prospect lies before me,
But shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it.
Here must I pause: for if the Faculty find out,
(And that they wont, I have no cause to hope)
then I must pay a dollar,
And that which they exact, that must be paid.
But when, or how? This world was made for eating—
I'm weary of conjectures—this must end 'em.
[*laying his hand on the money.*]
Thus am I doubly arm'd—My food and fine,
My bane and antidote lie both before me.
One, in a moment, brings me to a dinner,
While one informs me I must eat in commons!
The stomach, sure of being nobly fed,
Smiles at impending fines and being read off.
Latin shall fade away, Greek sink in years,
But thou, O stomach, in immortal youth,
Unhurt shall flourish mid a host of fines,
Nor give up glorious eating for them all.

EPICURUS.

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

It would be doing injustice to the conspicuous merit of some parts of Lorenzo's "Tomb of Philander," to allow them to appear in company with others, less happy. Our poetical friend seems to have adopted the idea somewhere advanced, that an author's heaven is to compose, his hell to correct. The *labor limæ* is a thorn which every one who attempts to cull the flowers of poesy, must expect to meet with. Lorenzo will excuse our freedom: and, perhaps, when the fever of composition has a little subsided, "and waits upon the judgment," he will not libel our impartiality.—The poet commences thus:

"The blue-grass is grown on the grave of Philander,"

and, representing his subject repairing to the tomb of her lover,

"Expos'd to the chilling, the damp nightly air,"

thus describes the horrors which surround her:

"Now loud screams the night bird, the wild beasts are howling,
"The wolf for his prey thro' the forest is prowling,
"At the well guarded sheep-fold the watch dog is growling,
"While Maria is weeping at Philander's grave!
"* * * * * * * nor thought of returning
("Thin was her white robe, and wet with the dew)
"Until from the orient the bright eye of morning,
"Beheld her still weep as she slowly withdrew.
"While sad here I wander and none to befriend me,
"May thy spirit, Philander, from evils defend me,
"In dreams be thou present, and waking attend me,
"Till we meet in the cold, deadly damps of the grave."

The spirit of Philander is described to appear: and the passage contains these lines, which deserve transcription:

"Thro' the stillness of evening the zephyrs are blowing,
"The pale moon is up and the stars brightly glowing, &c.

and thus poetically he concludes:

"With caution she rose up, and thinly attired,
"She walk'd forth and came to the wind-waving grove,
"Where, mourning alone, on the grave she expired,
"And paid the last vow to the youth of her love!
"Oh farewell, Maria, thy sorrows are over,
"Thy spirit has fled to unite with thy lover,
"Like doves, in the twilight ye near me shall hover,
"As pensive I pass by your tear bedew'd grave." *LORENZO.*

Any gentleman who can inform us whether an English translation of "*Historie de la Conjuration des Espagnols contre la Republique Venise, par Saint Real,*" is extant, and if it is, by whom executed, and where to be procured, will confer an obligation on the Editors, which they shall be proud to acknowledge.

H. has the true *vis poetica:* our pages shall ever be open to his verse.

Our humorous correspondent would be more welcome, on a subject of more interest. We lay aside his communication, as a comment on local circumstances, which however amusing they may be within a certain circle, are dull and insipid to foreign readers. We solicit his favors, and beg him to divert his satire to follies which, having a more general sway, will be more generally felt and understood. Man, says some observing writer, is the only animal endowed with the gift of laughter, and perhaps he is the only animal that deserves to be laughed at.

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